DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 064 805 24 EA 004 490

AUTHOR Walker, William G.
TITLE Centralization and Decentralization: An International Viewpoint on an American Dilemma. A Special CASEA Report.
INSTITUTION Oregon Univ., Eugene. Center for Advanced Study of Educational Administration.
SPONS AGENCY National Center for Educational Research and Development (DHEW/OE), Washington, D.C.
BUREAU NO BR-5-0217
PUB DATE Jan 72
CONTRACT OEC-4-10-163
NOTE 27p.
AVAILABLE FROM Publications Department, CASEA, University of Oregon, Eugene 97403 ($1.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Centralization; *Decentralization; *Educational Research; Governance; Organizational Change; *School District Autonomy; State School District Relationship; *Theories

ABSTRACT

This report outlines the history of the centralization-decentralization dilemma in the goverance of organizations, discusses two types of centralization-decentralization continua, and suggests further research. The first type of continuum discussed -- the traditional American -- refers to decisionmaking in the areas of public debate and partisan politics, involving citizen representation in policymaking through the medium of elections for legislatures, boards, and officials. The second continuum type -- the Australian model -- refers to the process of decisionmaking by administrative officers to whom responsibility is delegated by a school system. The author discusses the many international variations of these two types and then presents arguments for the preservation of the American model. (Author/JF)

ED 064805

A
Special
CASEA
Report

CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION:

An International Viewpoint on an American Dilemma

William G. Walker
CASEA
Visiting Research Fellow

January, 1972

EA 004 490

CASEA
CENTER FOR THE ADVANCED STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

CENTRALIZATION AND DECENTRALIZATION:

An International Viewpoint on an American Dilemma

William G. Walker
CASEA
Visiting Research Fellow
and sponsored by
American Council of Learned Societies

January 1972

Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon

American education after nearly 200 years of history faces many dilemmas, but there is one dilemma which, although apparently not clearly recognized by large sections of American society, or by American educators for that matter, is so profound as to challenge the very social and philosophical bases upon which the public school has developed.

The dilemma is one of choice between a predominantly centralized or a predominantly decentralized system of public education. This is by no means a new dilemma in the history of the governance of organizations: it is one which faced the Christian Church nearly 2,000 years ago, the British Empire three centurues ago and large industrial corporations and government today. Nor is this dilemma a new one for educational organizations. During the nineteenth century when so many nations shaped their public school systems educators and legislators went through agonies in the search for ideal organizational structures. Thus, the French chose a national system, nationally administered; the British a national system, locally administered; the Canadians provincial systems, locally administered; the Australians state systems, state administered.

The Americans faced a similar dilemma, but did not arrive at solutions quite as clear-cut as those of the countries referred to above. There were good reasons for this, most of them the products of the philosophies which shaped America herself. The Pilgrim Fathers brought a deep commitment to localism in governance, which had its roots in Calvinistic Switzerland, Holland and Scotland. The Virginian liberals, on the other hand, and especially those under the influence of the French Enlightenment, were

by no means as convinced about the virtues of localism, especially insofar as education was concerned. Jefferson's ill-fated Bill for the Wider Diffusion of Knowledge, for example, had its roots not in New England Calvinism, but in French Liberalism. His proposal for Virginian education was closer to Diderot's plan prepared for Catherine of Russia than to any New England plan. Similarly the prize-winning essays written for the American Philosophical Society by Samuel Knox and Samuel H. Smith presented models of a national, uniform system free from "the limitation of local, racial and religious prejudices." As Hansen[1] summarized Knox's argument, the United States had such a diverse population that "unless a uniform, universal system of education were provided, no unity could be achieved."

Neither the decisions of the Continental Congress nor the prescriptions of the Constitution gave form to American education, other than in the negative sense of leaving the question of governance to the individual states. Of crucial importance, however, were the Northwest Ordinances which, passed by Congress under strong New England pressure, allocated the sixteenth section of each township to the people for the support of public schools. These ordinances in effect imposed a localized system on the new states of the Union, though it was notable that the preambles to the acts approved by the state legislatures were often worded in Jeffersonian terms.

From the Northwest Ordinances emerged the "traditional" American pattern of governance--a weak state department providing limited leadership to a very large number of small local units, each with its own board, each independent of other forms of local government, each with its own taxing powers, each boasting one or more "little red schoolhouses." As early as the 1850s, however, it became clear that this pattern of governance, though

apparently well suited to rural America, would not satisfy the needs of the cities. It was, then, the urbanization of America which first seriously challenged educators to face up to the decentralization-centralization dilemma.

The "traditional" school board was supposed to be close to the people, but how could nine or ten individuals succeed in being close to a half a million, or a million, or more, constituents? The "traditional" school board represented a unique arm of government, but how unique could it remain when water, power, health, safety and transportation services, other important areas of government, were essential for the school's success, indeed, its survival? The "traditional" school board had "first chop" at the tax dollar, (a tax dollar based on property, and apparently appropriate for rural America but from the beginning obviously unsuited to urban forms of wealth) but for how long could city politicians put up with the ignominy of being "poor relations" to the school board? The "traditional" school board was supposed to be closely associated with the teachers it employed, but how could even the most well-meaning of board members relate to two or three thousand teachers?

Thus, the city-states of America, led by New York and Chicago, developed different patterns of governance which were quickly approved even by their "upstate"--or "downstate"--dominated legislatures. These patterns of governance were much more like those adopted in states and city-states in European countries than in the towns of rural America.

Usually, the Board of Education became one arm, but not a unique arm, of government; it competed directly with other local governmental services for funds; it set up a bureaucracy to run the schools; it tended to deperson-

alize both schools and teachers by identifying them by number rather than by name; it attempted to equalize opportunity among the wealthier and poorer sections of the city; it set up machinery so complex that not only lay citizens but employees within the system were confused by what was going on about them; it introduced civil-service type examinations for its vast army of employees; it avoided introducing innovations for fear of not being just to all; in short, it stood for nearly everything which was the opposite of what the "traditional" American school board stood for.

During the twentieth century, professors in the developing area of educational administration began asking questions about both the traditional "decentralized" district systems and the "centralized" city systems. Paul Mort at Columbia directed a number of studies related to what he called the "adaptability" of school systems. One of his students, Francoise Cillié, undertook a study of big city schools in a centralized system and of adjoining schools situated in a "traditional" decentralized system. In one of the most perceptive (and, incidentally, ignored) studies reported in American educational administration to that time Cillié concluded:

> Neither centralization by itself nor decentralization, but the centralization of certain aspects of education and the decentralization of others are necessary before the ultimate goal of educational adaptation can be fully achieved in the complete liberation of the potentialities of the individual pupil and the individual teacher.[2]

In the two decades following the Second World War there occurred a considerable thrust toward centralization and bigness in American education. The number of small school districts declined dramatically and in the middle sized cities there was much talk about, and some action toward, the new panacea, the "metro" systems. Almost contemporaneously there began

in the very big cities a thrust in the other direction, toward some form of decentralization. In Chicago, for example, parents and citizens looked for ways and means of bringing the huge and troubled system back to the grass roots level where it had originated in the "good old days" of the 1840s. The cry for more and more decentralization was exacerbated by the development of ghettos and by the requests by ethnic groups for a greater say in the operation of the schools serving them. The demands for decentralization, allegedly for this purpose, reached a peak in New York and produced the great teachers' strike of 1968.

Centralization-Decentralization Defined:

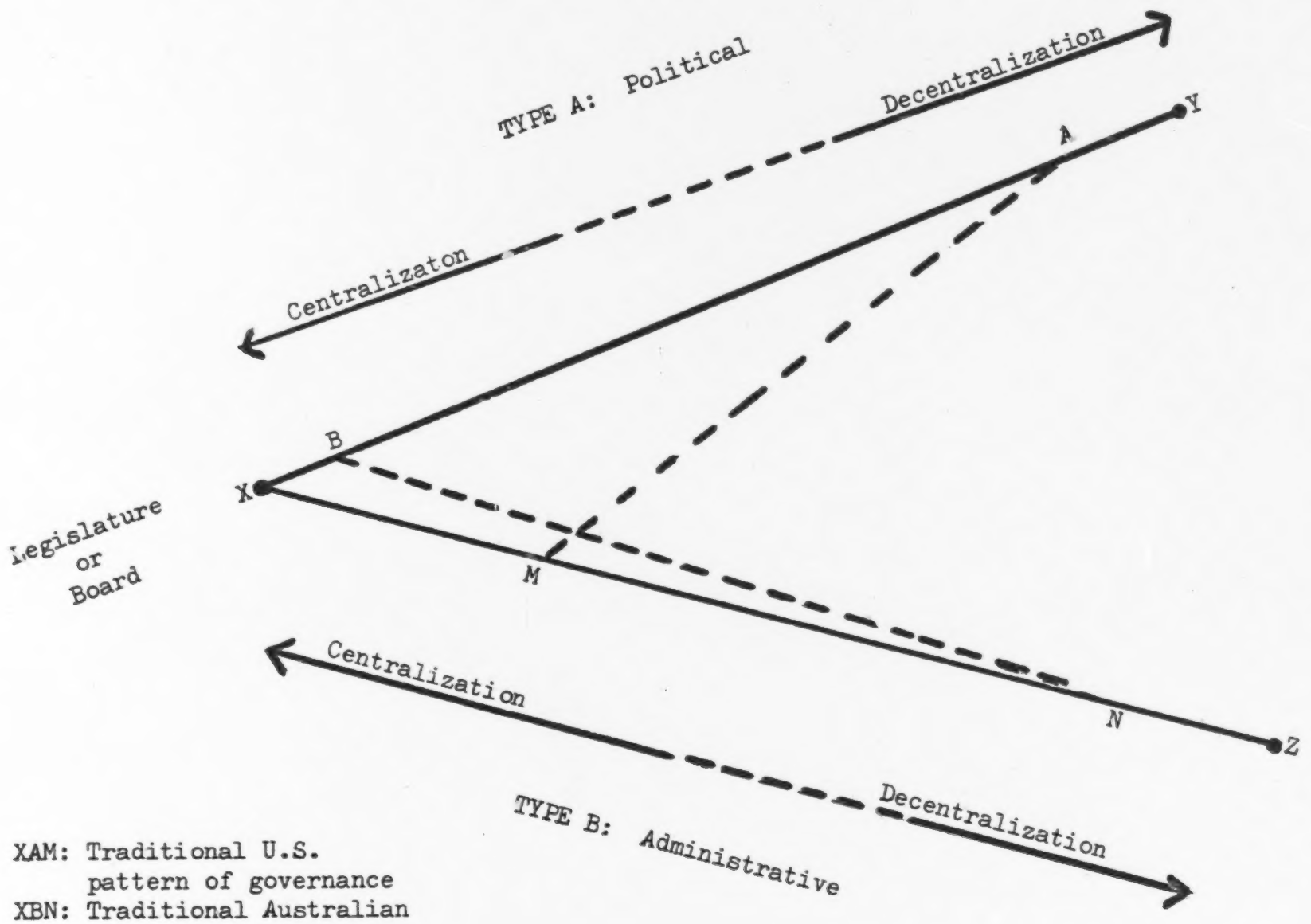
National Practices

Most discussions of "centralization" and "decentralization" make no attempt to define these key terms. However, it is important to do so in this paper, since it will not be possible to present a logical argument without such definitions.

"Decentralization" in America is used loosely to apply to two distinct governmental processes, each of which is best seen as a continuum.

The illustrative model (p. 6) hypothesizes the existence of two continua which might be used to describe the extent of centralization and/or decentralization in any country, state or other authority in which the controlling legislature or board is elected by the people. Point X represents the elected legislature; the line XY--the "political" dimension--represents delegation of responsibility by the legislature or board to other elected boards or officials; the line XZ--the "administrative" dimension--represents the delegation of responsibility by the legislature or board to

WALKER'S CENTRALIZATION-DECENTRALIZATION TRIANGLE



XAM: Traditional U.S. pattern of governance
XBN: Traditional Australian pattern of governance

its appointed officers. Any nation, state or authority may be placed at an appropriate point on each continuum and, if desired, these points may be joined to produce a triangle illustrating that system's reliance on one or the other or both of these varieties of centralization-decentralization. On the model an attempt has been made to show two triangles representing the "traditional" American (XAM) and Australian state (XBN) patterns of governance.

The first continuum, Type A Centralization-Decentralization, refers to decision making in the area of public debate and of partisan politics and involves citizen representation in policy making through the election of legislatures, boards and officials. Close to the centralization pole of this continuum is Hawaii where the only representation of the people occurs in the state legislature, there being no other elected bodies at state, regional or local level. Close to the other extreme of the continuum are the schools of Illinois where the people not only elect the legislature, but the state superintendent of education, county superintendent and local school board. They also play a role in the election of officers of the PTA which can have a considerable influence on the operation of individual schools. In no other English-speaking country is Type A decentralization as marked as in parts of the United States.

However, there are several stages intermediate between the two extremes referred to above. In England[3], for example, the people have direct representation in the national parliament, at the county or Local Education Authority (LEA) level and, through boards of governors or boards of managers, at individual school levels. New Zealand represents a point somewhere between England and an Australian state: the people have direct representation in the national parliament and, through school committees

and boards, at individual school and district levels. Canada presents a picture closer to the "traditional" U.S. model--the people are represented in the provincial legislature and in local school board or trustee elections. In the Australian states the situation is much the same as in Hawaii with the only representatives of the people being members of state legislatures. There are no elected state, regional or local officials or boards.

The dominant practices in each of these systems may be readily plotted on the accompanying diagram.

The other continuum, Type B Centralization-Decentralization, refers to the process of decision making by administrative officers to whom responsibility is delegated by a school system. Thus, in one system the head office might clutch all responsibility to its bosom, while another might delegate much responsibility to officers in the field. This continuum takes no cognizance of elected boards or officials at any level below that of the elected controlling legislature or board.

In England ("a national system, locally administered") Her Majesty's Inspectors, the eyes and ears of the ministry, exercise a general oversight over the operation of local authorities and work in close liaison with local chief education officers. Headmasters, however, accept real responsibility for shaping what goes on in individual schools and it is they who are the backbone of the system.

In America the states have traditionally delegated nearly all responsibility for the operation of schools to local districts, the state supervisors and county superintendents (or their equivalents) playing a rather less controlling role than Her Majesty's Inspectors in England. On the other hand, the individual principal has lacked the power and prestige of

the English headmaster, the backbone of the local system being the superintendent.

The Canadian provinces have exercised a tight control over the operation of local boards and individual schools through the inspector of schools. This control is now being loosened and its effects are at present not easy to predict, but it seems likely that principals will soon be playing a much more important role than in the past.

In New Zealand the primary (elementary) schools, each of which is supported by a school committee, are assigned to district boards, and their principals are responsible to the national office through the district directors and national inspectors of schools. Primary school principals have considerable autonomy, but by no means as great as that enjoyed by high school principals who, with the support of a school board of governors, closely resemble the English headmasters insofar as powers and responsibilities are concerned.

The Australian state education systems exercise a tight control over schools through inspectors and in some states through regional directors. Principals--and especially high school principals--have a considerable degree of freedom, however, and appear to exercise more power than U.S. or Canadian principals, but not as much as that enjoyed by heads in England and New Zealand. There has been much talk of decentralization in Australia during the last two decades, and this has nearly always referred to Type B decentralization, which has usually been achieved through the establishment of area or regional offices. No serious attempt has been made to introduce Type A decentralization.

Again, as with Type A practices, Type B practices may be plotted on

the model, and a triangle produced which describes dominant procedures of governance in national, state or local systems.

There is clearly a wide range of Type A and Type B combinations open to the educational policy maker in a Western democracy. Yet there is little consensus as to what is best. Indeed, the most fascinating fact emerging from a study of the systems in the countries referred to above is not the considerable dissatisfaction with existing patterns of governance which is being expressed by both laymen and educators--though that is fascinating enough--but the direction of the criticisms being made. The general trend is clear--the more decentralized countries are busily looking for ways to centralize, and the more centralized countries are busily looking for ways to decentralize.

In Britain the Maude Report[4] has recommended the reduction of the Local Education Authority's members to a fewer number. Thus, the English may be moving closer to the centralization pole of the Type A continuum, while remaining close to the midpoint of Type B continuum.

The Canadians are tending to go even further than the British. In the Maritimes, for example, the large number of small school districts with their own taxing powers are being replaced by a much smaller number of districts which no longer have the power to tax. At the same time, however, there is a move, virtually Canada-wide, to limit the duties and power of the provincial inspector and to hand more authority to the principal. Thus, the Canadians are moving closer to the centralization pole of the Type A continuum, and contemporaneously to the decentralization pole of the Type B continuum.

It is difficult to identify a clear trend in New Zealand. Perhaps

because of its comparative social stability, perhaps because of the success of its present system, which presents a nice balance of centralization and decentralization--about midway on both continua--there appears to be relatively little public or professional dissatisfaction with the status quo. The history of New Zealand education shows a clear and continuing trend toward greater control by the national government, but there is little evidence that this has accelerated in recent years.

The Australians on the other hand, prodded by the scathing comments of U.S., Canadian and English observers (not to mention the occasional smug New Zealander!) have become very much concerned about decentralization in the course of the last two decades. In most states efforts have been made to divide their geographical areas into regions which, it is hoped, will bring senior departmental officers into closer personal contact with the people and the teachers of the region. At the same time efforts are being made throughout Australia to alter the emphasis in the role of the inspector from that of assessor to that of advisor and to increase the authority of principals. It is most important to note that all of these developments are taking place on the Type B continuum, and although unkind critics have referred to them as constituting recentralization rather than decentralization, there can be little doubt that the Australian systems are moving closer to the decentralization pole of the Type B continuum. Type A decentralization has very few supporters in Australia and has rarely been seriously considered as an alternative. There is at present a move among parents and others citizens in the Australian Capital Territory to urge the establishment of a local system of the U.S. variety, but little progress is being made. It seems that for many years to come the Australians will

remain firmly at the centralization pole of the Type A continuum.

It is appropriate to ask why educators in all of these countries, and the U.S. to which we will turn shortly, are so committed to patterns of governance about which very little information of an empirically derived nature is available. Some reasons are certainly to be found in the political and other social theories of the respective countries. But more important is the conviction, based on accumulated observational comparative data, that particular governmental structures do influence, however subtly, the quality of education offered to children, the morale of teachers, the satisfactions experienced by administrators, the climates of classrooms and schools and the aspirations of parents and of citizens generally.

Variety and Adaptability: Type B Correlates

Observation by this author of schools and school systems in all of the countries referred to above suggests that the key administrative goals of flexibility and adaptability are correlates of the Type A continuum rather than of the Type B continuum. Observers of Australia (clearly a Type B country) from U.S.A., Britain and Canada (still predominantly Type A countries) have criticized the Australian educational systems for their emphasis upon efficiency rather than humanity, for their conformity rather than variety, for their mediocrity rather than excellence, and for their lack of adaptability.

Kandel[5] wrote in 1938:

> A central authority tends to grow by the power which it wields and when such an authority exercises at once, the rights to legislate ...by Orders-in-Council, to execute, and to judge, the result is

> inevitably rule by a bureaucracy which imposes its will and ultimately secures uniformity in aspects of the educational process where uniformity is least desirable.

Seventeen years later Butts[6] wrote:

> Not only do I find a presumption in favor of uniform policies as good in themselves, but also I find the belief that uniform policies can be maintained on a state-wide basis only by centralizing decision-making in the hands of a relatively few persons.

As recently as 1961, Jackson[7] commented:

> In the two largest states, there are clear indications that retention of the present system of inflexible central control, with little or no real delegation of responsibility and authority, will inevitably bring the whole administrative machinery grinding to a full stop.

None of these observations has failed to admit the greater equality of opportunity which Type B centralization apparently provides. Nor has their efficiency been overlooked. Cramer[8], for example, commented upon how much more easily the Victorian schools survived the depression of the 1930s than did the schools of his native Oregon. But all the observers have asked or at least implied the question: is the achievement of this equality and efficiency really worthwhile when such a price is paid in other ways?

Yet in spite of the comments of these and many other observers there are clear signs that the school systems of America are themselves moving in the very direction for which Australia is criticized--toward centralization of the Type B variety. Further, a number of contemporary movements appear to be exacerbating this trend.

The signs of centralization include:

i. The continuing decline in the number of school districts and the subsequent development of fewer, larger districts.

ii. The growth of intermediate units of various types.

iii. The increase in the size, quality and functions of professional staff employed by state departments of education.

iv. The large scale entry of the federal government into the education scene.

v. The increasing proportion of school finances being provided by state and federal governments rather than local government.

Coupled with these, and closely related to them are a number of highly significant developments which are partly the cause of and partly the product of the above trends. These include:

1. The growing interest of state legislatures in such areas as curriculum, hours of work, teacher qualifications and quality of student achievement.

2. The growing tendency, following the 1971 decision of the California Supreme Court that the property tax was an inequitable tax, to argue that the state should raise all, or nearly all, funds for education and should reimburse districts on a per capita basis. This tendency appears to be the result of three important causes:

   a. The new emphasis on equality of educational opportunity. (It is claimed that state financing would result in a more equitable distribution of funds.)

   b. The considerable public dissatisfaction with the property tax as a source of funds for education. (It is often difficult to determine whether the public in its voting behavior

is attacking the property tax or the public schools, so closely are the two related to most states.)

c. The heaven-sent opportunity for men in high positions to strengthen their existing power or to spread the area of their power. (They silently acknowledge a tendency at least as obvious in America as anywhere else in the world that "he who pays the piper calls the tune.")

3. The increasing use of electronic data processing which hungrily gobbles up information then looks around for more. Greater and greater amounts of information are being accumulated by fewer and fewer individuals. The information they possess clearly strengthens the hand of the central administrator, who needs no reminding that knowledge is power. There can be little doubt that the introduction of PPBS-type systems will produce a marked centralizing effect in the future.

4. The growing gulf between administrators and school board members on the one hand, and of teachers on the other--surely one of the unhealthiest trends in American education today. As dissatisfaction and distrust grow among teachers they are likely to group together in larger and larger organizations, or more likely, one large organization. In self defense administrators will do --indeed, are doing--the same. The effect of this, on the part of teachers, is likely to be a demand for statewide or even nationwide salary schedules (as in Australia and England respectively) and on the part of administrators for policies and procedures which will "beat the teachers at their own game."

Under such conditions the growth of "groupthink," rigidity and anti-innovative procedures among both groups is highly likely.

5. The continuing and growing problems of the big cities which relate to a wide range of social ills and which center about ethnic and financial problems. The solution of such problems seems likely to lie in a decline in Type A structures and a growth in Type B structures.

There is considerable a priori evidence in support of these generalizations. The data obtained by Andes, Johns and Kimbrough and reported in 1971[9] are also highly supportive. A detailed study of the problems arising from the organizational structures of large school systems was carried out with the cooperation of more than 500 professors, state and district administrators and other citizens. Twenty-seven statements describing possible organizational developments were referred, using the Delphi Technique, to two panels of experts, the first consisting of chief state school officers or their representatives, the second of superintendents of large school districts or their representatives.

The Delphi predictions for certain of these items are of much interest for this paper. Some sample statements and median predicted dates for the introduction of proposed changes are:

1. Education will be administered by state governments with the concurrent elimination of the existing local school districts in at least five states (state officers by 1983, city superintendents by 1980).
2. Education in the metropolitan areas (within a state) will have a single taxing and financing district and multiple operating

districts in at least five metropolitan areas (1978, 1978).

5. Administrative decentralization in at least five urban school districts will be through the technique of decentralizing to regional superintendents or by transferring additional administrative responsibility to principals (1972, 1975).
6. Community controlled educational districts of less than 10,000 pupils will be the organizational pattern in at least five metropolitan areas (1980, 1978).
7. State and Federal governments will supply the total school budget from nonlocal tax sources (elimination of local property tax) in at least five states (1980-1983).
8. Federal and state governments will supply the minimum operating budget for education and local property taxes will supply additional funds for education (less than 25 per cent of total budget) in at least five states (1978, 1978).
15. The internal organizational structure of at least five urban school systems will be designed on the basis of PPBS (1974, 1975).
18. Education will be financed by state governments with local school districts having educational and operational control (1979, 1983).
19. At least five metropolitan areas will see the independent operating school districts unified into metropolitan educational districts serving urban, suburban and fringe areas (1977, 1976).
20. Teacher association organizations will, in at least five states, negotiate on the state level rather than on the local school

district level for salaries and working conditions (1977, 1978).

It is important to note that none of these developments was described by respondents as never likely to occur, or as occurring later than 1990. Indeed, most developments cited here (and other related developments) were seen by most participants as taking place before 1980.

Unfortunately, the authors of the report give full details as to the desirability of the above developments only as they relate to an intermediate stage of the research, and not as expressed in the Delphi Questionnaire. However, it is interesting to note that at the intermediate stage both groups, i.e., chief state officers and city superintendents gave a negative desirability to Item 1, the adoption of a state system and the elimination of local districts. Items 2 and 19 suggesting metropolitan taxing and operating districts, were regarded as greatly desirable, as was Item 5 (more decentralization to regional superintendents or principals). Item 7, suggesting that a total service budget be met by state and Federal governments was quite strongly supported, while Item 8, suggesting that 75 per cent of funding come from those sources, was very strongly supported. Item 20, relating to statewide salary scales for teachers was positively, but unenthusiastically, received. Items 6 and 18 showed a clear division of opinion among the two groups of respondents. Item 6 referred to community controlled (i.e., Type A) districts. This organizational pattern was noted as undesirable by the urban superintendents but slightly desirable by the chief state officers. Item 18, on the other hand, suggesting total state financing but local control of education was regarded as slightly desirable by the superintendents, and undesirable by the chief education officers. As the authors pungently put the matter,

"The chief state school officers preferred to keep control with the money."[10] As might have been predicted, Item 15, suggesting the use of PPBS in urban school systems, was strongly supported by both groups.

The responses to these statements serve to highlight the contemporary dilemma of American education, and support in general the present author's observations of the American scene.

On the one hand there is some support for Type A decentralization; on the other some support for Type B decentralization. Yet over all hangs the expectation, whether regarded as desirable or otherwise, that a much greater degree of centralization of both types is just a few years away. There is a noticeable move away from the traditional "grass roots" control and yet a considerable "traditional" suspicion of central control. The dilemma remains.

This author was educated in and taught in a centralized state which was predominantly a Type B educational system. He is well aware of the commonly expressed weaknesses and strengths of such a system. While accepting that a centralized system probably provides for a greater degree of equality (though by no means the equality which so many administrators, politicians, and even judges so naively look to in America today) and a considerable level of efficiency, serious questions must be asked about the suitability of huge, bureaucratized, complex and relatively impersonal organizations to control the intensely personal relationship we call "education."

I have discussed this at length in other publications[11] and it is unnecessary to restate the arguments now. Suffice it to say I have a number of prejudices against a highly centralized system irrespective of

how many attempts are made to humanize it through Type B decentralization. The English-speaking countries to which those of us who live amidst centralized school systems look for refreshment, ideas and innovations, are those of America, Britain and to a lesser extent Canada. The one fundamental aspect of governance which all three nations share is, as shown at the beginning of this paper, Type A decentralization. This fact seems to bring a vitality and an adaptability which is rarely, if ever, seen in centralized systems.

It is not suggested that this author's assumptions about the impact of centralization on schools are proven. But the comments of many distinguished American educators on what they have seen as the weaknesses of centralized systems elsewhere suggest the need for great circumspection before taking the same path. It might well be that in giving up Type A decentralization, irrespective of the reason for that action, American administrators are giving up the one real key to education's future success.

Needed Research in Centralization-Decentralization

To conclude this paper it might prove rewarding to look initially at some popular assumptions about the impact of Type B centralization on schools, and in doing so to raise areas of needed research in American education. Perhaps it would not be too much to ask American legislators, teachers' associations and administrators to encourage research in these areas before sacrificing Type A decentralization at the altars of alleged efficiency, economy and equality of opportunity.

1. A centralized system produces greater equality of opportunity.

   Is this in fact so? If so, how marked is the difference from decentralized systems? In such systems do children in the inner city or outer rural areas fare as well as those in suburbia with regard to quality of teachers, richness of curriculum, adequacy of plant, etc.?

2. A centralized system is more efficient.

   How is efficiency defined in education? How is it measured? How do cognitive and affective outcomes differ under such systems? What proportion of funds are spent on administration as compared with decentralized systems?

3. Centralized system tends to breed mediocrity.

   What is meant by mediocrity? Does it mean lack of "lighthouse" schools? Does it mean lack of very poor schools? Does it mean lack of vision, lack of ambition in teachers and children?

4. A centralized system breeds impersonality.

   Does impersonality really matter? Does it affect teacher morale? Does it affect pupil-teacher interaction? Is the behavior of teachers in predominatly Type B system classrooms different from that of teachers in predominantly Type A classrooms? How are the climates of individual schools influenced by the climates of the system as a whole?

5. A centralized system stifles innovation.

   Is this true generally or does it apply to only some kinds of innovation? Are innovations once approved, more

quickly introduced across a state with a "centralized" system than one with a number of "decentralized" systems? Are all principals in a centralized system "locals" or "place-bound"?

These and, no doubt, other questions will need to be answered with some degree of certainty before those responsible for policy making in American education take too many giant steps in one direction. As suggested above, the research possibilities are great. There are centralized and decentralized systems in this country--and in other countries--where researchers from institutions like CASEA might work in attempting to compare and contrast the influence of different organizational patterns. More studies of the Cillié type referred to earlier are urgently needed[12], though a greater degree of sophistication might be expected in the future.

Conclusion

I shall conclude this paper with a hypothesis. It is that if certain American school systems adopt Type B decentralization rather than the traditional Type A pattern of decentralization, then by 1990 a greater equality of educational opportunity and more efficiency in administration will be achieved, but that the schools will be less adaptable, less experimental, less innovative, less varied than they are today.

The theme of this paper is not the preservation of Type A decentralization for its own sake. Nor is the theme the preservation of all traditional patterns associated with Type A decentralization; obviously there is great

scope for change and improvement, and for a combination of Type A and Type B practices.

The theme of the paper is the urgent need for hard data on which policy decisions regarding future structures might be based. Such data, not too difficult to find, is sadly lacking, and important, perhaps almost suicidal, decisions are being taking in its absence.

It is a common practice for Americans to criticize the public schools. In recent years there have been many accusations of inflexibility, lack of adaptability and lack of innovative capacity. While these criticisms have often been justified, the scholar with an eye to developments in other Western countries can only express the wish that schools in some of those countries were as adaptable, flexible, innovative and experimental as the much derided schools of America.

This judgment is, of course, a relative one: it does not deny the existence of other shortcomings in American schools.

The fact remains that there is a great deal to be valued in American education, much to be preserved, much worthy of being built upon. The key to that worth appears to lie, in the absence of data to the contrary, in the preservation of Type A decentralization, irrespective of what Type B structures are added to it. The encouragement of the traditions of local taxation and local representation seems to be essential, even in the great cities, if the magic of the American school is to be preserved.

REFERENCES

1. Allen O. Hansen, Liberalism and American Education in the Eighteenth Century, (New York: MacMillan, 1926).

2. Francois Cillie', Centralization and Decentralization. Contributions to Education No. 789, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1940).

3. For descriptions of the education systems of Australia, Canada, England and New Zealand see George Baron, Dan H. Cooper and William G. Walker. Educational Administration: International Perspectives, (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969).

4. Royal Commission on Local Government in England, (London: HMSO, 1967).

5. I. L. Kandel, Types of Administration, (Melbourne: A.C.E.R., 1938), p. 51.

6. R. F. Butts, Assumptions Underlying Australian Education, (Melbourne: A.C.E.R., 1955), p. 13.

7. R. W. B. Jackson, Emergent Needs in Australian Education, (Toronto: University of Toronto Department of Educational Research, 1961), p. 25.

8. J. F. Cramer, Australian Schools Through American Eyes, (Melbourne: A.C.E.R., 1936).

9. John O. Andes, Roe L. Johns and Ralph B. Kimbrough, Changes in Organizational Structure of Large School Systems, (University of Florida, 1971. Litho).

10. Ibid., p. 217.

11. W. G. Walker, Theory and Practice in Educational Administration, (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1970).

    _____, "Educational Administration", Chapter IX in R. W. T. Cowan (ed.). Education for Australians, (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1964).

    _____, "The Governance of Education in Australia", Journal of Educational Administration, VIII, May, 1970.

12. This is not to imply that no work has been done in this area, but to point out that much more needs doing. Useful recent studies include:

Richard L. Featherstone and Frederick W. Hill, "Urban School Decentralization", American School and University, 41, October 1968 and February 1969.

Marilyn Gittell and T. Edward Hollender, Six Urban School Districts, (New York: Praeger, 1968).

A. Harry Passow, Toward Creating a Model School System: A Study of the Washington, D. C. Public Schools, (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1967).